

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

The Mission of the Church: What It's Not

Speaker:

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Scriptures:

Various

"The mission of the church is to go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and gathering these disciples into churches, that they might worship the Lord and obey his commands now and in eternity to the glory of God the Father."

Greg Gilbert & Kevin DeYoung,
What is the Mission of the Church?

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CHURCH

Theme: Evaluate your thinking about mission to ensure it aligns with the gospel.

Introduction: "Orthodoxy leads to orthopraxy." That is, sound doctrine leads to sound practice. We must have sound beliefs if we are going to live soundly, and that applies to everything we do in this world. It especially applies to mission. Since the mission of the church is to make disciples, we must have sound beliefs about what a disciple is so that we can evaluate our mission accordingly, and avoid dangerous errors.

Here are 4 things that mission is *not*:

1. Individualistic (Acts 13:1-4)

In Acts 13, Saul/Paul and Barnabas are set apart for mission. They do not share a sense of call or interior compulsion. They are chosen by the Spirit as evidenced in the church's call.

When the Lord saves us, he does not save us into individualism. We are joined into the church. And we are wise to include the church in how we think about mission.

Many Christians have made mission a matter of individual, subjective calling. That is not the emphasis we find in the Bible.

2. To be a blessing (Genesis 12:1-3)

Some Christians have sought to broaden out the mandate of the Great Commission. They look to Abram's call (Gen 12) as a paradigm for mission: blessed to be a blessing. However, "blessing others" ≠ mission.

Christians are to bless others; but mission means discipleship. Even the way that Abram "blessed the nations" is explicitly tied to saving faith (cf. Gal 3:7-9).

If someone is engaging missions and their aim is not discipleship, they are not doing missions. Some engage the work for bad or even selfish reasons.

3. Mediate the presence of God (Exodus 19:5-6)

Just as blessing others ≠ mission, so also blessing others ≠ mediating the presence of God. Only Jesus is the mediator between God and man.

4. Jesus as social justice warrior (Luke 4:16-21)

In our day, social justice warriors generally adopt popular, novel ideas of virtue, and then tell others that they need to be more aware ('woke') of those same ideas.

In that way, they proclaim their own innocence, even while they self-righteously condemn others. Theirs is the long-tread path of another gospel, the social gospel.

They crave and strive for the world's approval.

Questions:

1. What errors about mission have affected you?
2. How does your life demonstrate orthodox discipleship?
3. What opportunities has the Lord given you to disciple others?